by Dylan Horrocks

Pickle

№ 5

FOR MATURE READERS

ANTIPODEAN PICTURE STORIES AT THEIR VERY BEST

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Black Eye

Pickle

Nº 5, OCTOBER 1994

by **Dylan Horrocks**
editor **Dolan Hicks (mrs.)**
publisher **Michel Vrána**
promotion **Rob Veri**

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Back cover illustration Emil Kópen's studio in Cornucopia.

"Language is the key to personhood."
—**Carl Barks**

Thanks to all those who made my recent stay in Canada and San Diego so wonderful, especially Michel, Chuck and Jacqueline Vrana, Ray Luk, Nick Craine, Jay Stephens, Chris Oliveros and Marina Lesenko, Steve Solomos, Sean Scoffield, Seth, Chester Brown, Joe Matt, Ed Brubaker, Jon Lewis, Megan Kelso, Tom Hart, Eric Searleman & Beth Kawasaki, Brian Biggs, Eric Reynolds, David Mazzucchelli, Tammy Watson, Len & Paul of the Canadian Legal Defense Fund, Jason Lutes, Rob Veri, Tom Fassbender, and my family in Buffalo, NY. This issue dedicated to Michel, with thanks for his kindness and patience.

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Letter from Hicksville.

Dolan Hicks (Mrs.) c/o Pickle, P.O. Box 5512, Wellesley St., Auckland, New Zealand

Hello, dear readers! I'm sorry if this issue is a bit late, but you see Debs (who runs the Hicksville Record Shop) was going over to America for a little working holiday in Seattle (I understand there's some sort of "grungie" thing going on there?) and so I thought, "Well, I'll give the artwork for Pickle 5 to her and she can drop it in to Michel at Black Eye! I mean, Seattle is just over the border from Canada, so I hear. That'll save Hyram a trip in his boat."

Well, little did I realise that Canada is rather larger than New Zealand, and that Seattle and Cambridge, Ontario are about as far apart as you can get up there! Poor old Debs ended up having quite an adventure, making her way from the West Coast to the East Coast and overcoming all sorts of obstacles along the way. However, in the end she did make it and I can't begin to tell you how relieved poor Michel was to see her (and the artwork!). In the time it had taken her to get there, I'd started to get a bit worried and had written to Michel asking if he could put the word around a bit in case anyone had seen her (although he assures me he doesn't know *that* many of the people in Canada).

Anyhow, all's well that ends well. And at least Debs has had an adventure now (as they're not so easy to have these days) and I've asked her if she could do us a little Hicksville Hit Parade next issue on some of the mini-comics she found up there in Seattle and on her travels. I'm afraid there's no room this issue for any letters as we've included a wee introduction to Cornucopia, in case some of you don't know much about Emil Kópen's charming homeland. So now, without further ado, I'll leave you with your delicious cup of Lapsang Souchong, a little something to nibble on and the new Pickle.

Ever Affectionately Yours,

Dolan Hicks

Dolan Hicks (mrs.)

CORNUCOPIA:

AN INTRODUCTION

Cornucopia is a country once famous for two things: cartography and magic. During the middle ages, travellers were loathe to cross its borders for all the tales of sorcery and witchcraft, but Cornucopians themselves were much sought after for their skills in map-making and geography.

The capital is Crieste. Other cities of note include Gengarna and Pólcjar, but the bulk of the country is still rural or even untamed wilderness, such as the northern rainforests and the southern mountains. The landscape for the most part has remained unchanged since the Enlightenment.

Even today, Cornucopia's landscape shows signs of those two disciplines. Towns, cities, farms and roads all reflect their sense of geography — both physical and occult. The landscape follows intricate patterns that hint at geomantic purposes and seem designed to suit journeys of the spirit as much as those of the body.

Cornucopia's cartooning tradition dates back at least to medieval woodcuts, but in the modern sense cartooning in Cornucopia is dominated by the figure of Emil Kópen. He began drawing cartoons and comic strips for Criestian broadsheets and later newspapers in the 1910's and by the 1930's he had begun experimenting with full comic books. Printing and publishing in Cornucopia have always been rudimentary, however, and even today newspapers are brief and for the most part empty of illustrations. It is a mark of the popular respect in which Kópen is held across Cornucopia that his obscure and erotic comic strip *Irjan vir Pidz* is still printed in the otherwise highly conservative newspaper *Criesti Njad.*

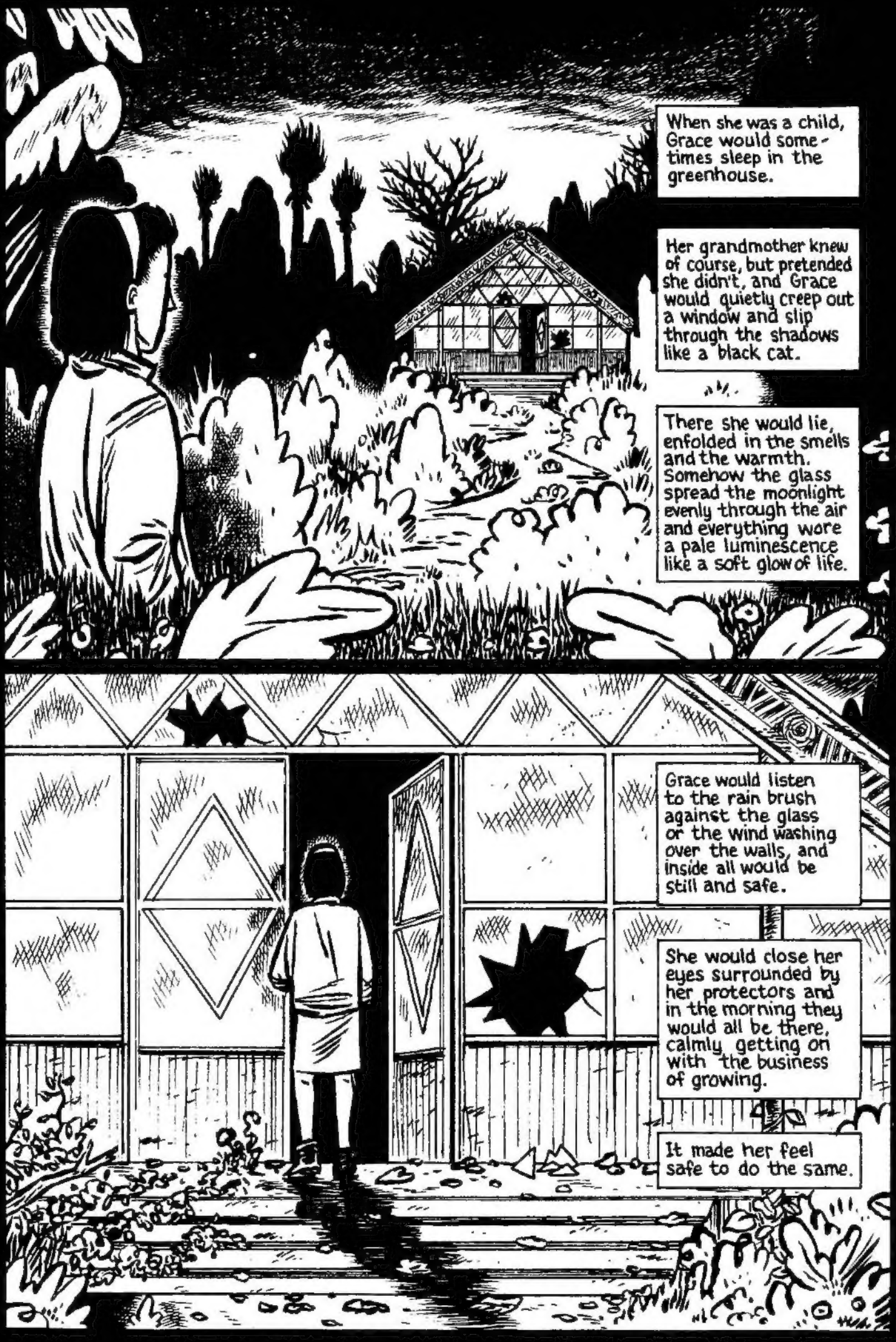
When Leonard Batts came to Hicksville, I was out of town.
In Peru, maybe, or Africa. It's hard to keep track after a while.
But Grace had just returned. And Sam.
The valley was warm with the last of an overlong summer. Slow afternoons, golden light, the rhythm of cicadas.
Languid, Grace calls it The kind of days she'd missed most about home.
Me too, I guess.

In Cornucopia, Grace had told me her garden was the one landmark she still felt behind her; sometimes she would look over her shoulder half expecting to see it there waiting.
Georgia O'Keefe
Working at the Crieste Botanic Institute, she would often come across plants that she knew from her own garden, like letters from home.
I've always thought of plants as just part of the landscape, part of the *place*. But to Grace they *inhabit* places, as we do. Many are nomads - conquering then moving on. She saw her garden as a community. A sanctuary.
She told me it would draw her back in the end. Nothing else. Just the garden.
And now here it was - ruined beyond repair, almost beyond recognition. The weeds and the nomads had colonised everything, choking and dispossessing all else. Irretrievably.
It was no longer her landscape. It felt like an exile.

There was no particular event that had made her leave.
Things with Danton and Kupe had grown so intense, until one day she realised she just wanted to be really alone. She couldn't remember when she last felt happy and relaxed.
So she packed a bag and left.
Somewhere in the Amazon she suddenly understood how much she had left behind. For days she could neither eat nor sleep for the pain.
When I saw her, it was in Cornucopia. At first she seemed wary of me, afraid, I suppose, that I would revive that terrible pain. But soon she clung to me like a rescued child.
KORNUKOPIJA·25
I thought her strong - hardened, wiser. But now I think it was fear: the appearance of strength people have when they've grown accustomed to fear.
ONE TIME, THE INSTITUTE SENT HER INTO THE JUNGLE TO COLLECT SAMPLES OF A RARE FLOWERING CREEPER...

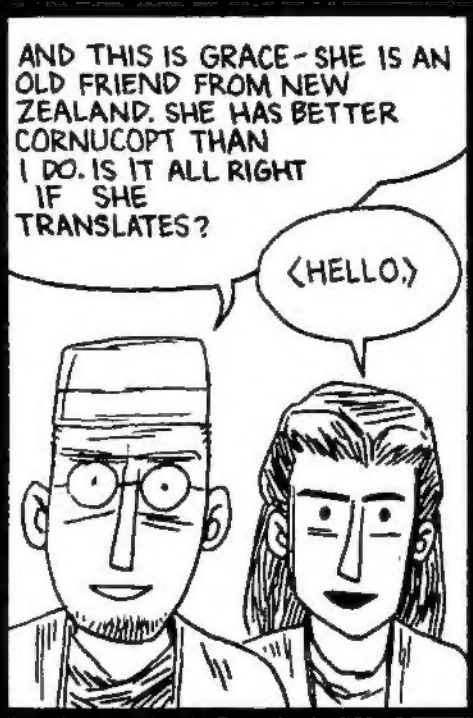
ON HER WAY BACK, SHE CAME TO A TOWN THAT HAD BEEN FLOODED BY THE SWOLLEN RIVER.
ONLY WHEN SHE SAW THE WISHING TREE DID SHE REALISE WHERE SHE WAS. SHE HAD PASSED THROUGH ONLY A WEEK BEFORE, BUT SINCE THEN THE LANDSCAPE HAD BEEN ERASED BY THE RISING WATERS.
THE WISHING TREE STOOD AT THE HEART OF THE TOWN, TOWERING FIFTY FEET TALL. FOR ONE MONTH EACH YEAR IT WOULD FLOWER - PURE WHITE BLOSSOMS THAT WOULD CARPET THE PIAZZA WHEN THEY FELL. THE REST OF THE TIME IT BORE WISHES - OFFERINGS FROM THE TOWNSFOLK WHO WOULD BRAVE THE LONG CLIMB TO ITS UPPER BRANCHES OR, SOMETIMES, PAY THE YOUNG BOYS TO DO IT FOR THEM. EACH TOKEN EARNED THE SUPPLICANT A SINGLE WISH.
THE LOCALS CALLED IT THE TREE OF SAINT YANNA. IT WAS SAID TO HAVE PERFORMED MIRACLES.

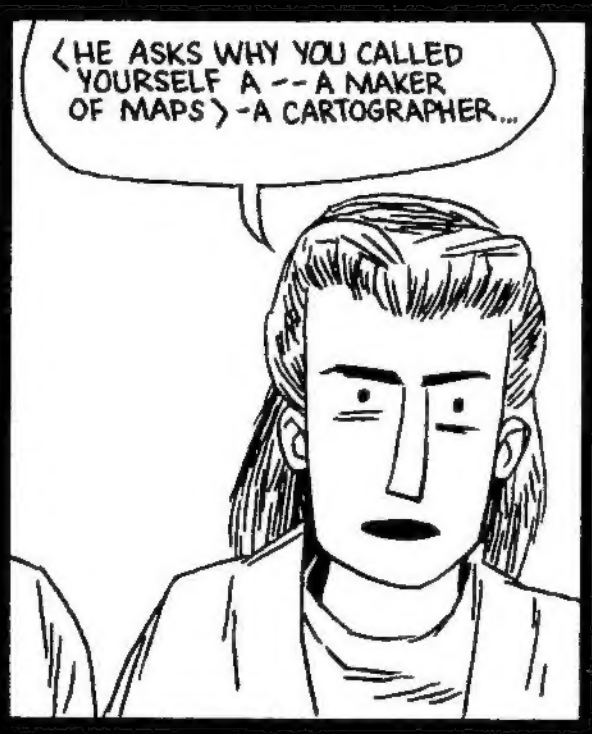
SANTA YANNA PROTECT WHAT I HAVE PLANTED. LET MY PATH BE A CIRCLE, BACK TO MY HOME, BACK TO LOVE. LET EVERYTHING BE AS IT WAS BEFORE.
This had always been her favourite time of day.
She liked to walk away from familiarity into the growing darkness, where things dissolved into vague shapes that then merged.
She felt weightless within that huge heavy blackness, as though she could just let go of the ground and rise up into the sky.


When she was a child, Grace would sometimes sleep in the greenhouse.
Her grandmother knew of course, but pretended she didn't, and Grace would quietly creep out a window and slip through the shadows like a black cat.
There she would lie, enfolded in the smells and the warmth. Somehow the glass spread the moonlight evenly through the air and everything wore a pale luminescence like a soft glow of life.
Grace would listen to the rain brush against the glass or the wind washing over the walls, and inside all would be still and safe.
She would close her eyes surrounded by her protectors and in the morning they would all be there, calmly getting on with the business of growing.
It made her feel safe to do the same.

The main reason I was in Cornucopia was to meet their greatest cartoonist, Emil Kópen.

Grace's Cornucopt was better than mine, so I asked her to come along as translator the first time I visited him.


AND THIS IS GRACE - SHE IS AN OLD FRIEND FROM NEW ZEALAND. SHE HAS BETTER CORNUCOPT THAN I DO. IS IT ALL RIGHT IF SHE TRANSLATES?
〈HELLO.〉



〈CARTOGRAPHER. IT IS SIMPLY HABIT. I STUDIED UNDER THE GREAT IURE PILARI AS A BOY AND THE SKILLS HE TAUGHT ME THEN ARE STILL WHAT I USE TODAY...〉
HOW IS A COMIC STRIP LIKE A MAP?
WHAT'S THE WORD FOR 'COMICS' AGAIN?
'PIKTORII'
YES - IT MEANS IN ENGLISH 'TEXT - PICTURE'.
〈OKAY - HOW ARE *PIKTORII* LIKE MAPS?〉
〈THEY ARE THE SAME THING: USING *ALL* OF LANGUAGE - NOT ONLY WORDS OR PICTURES.〉
〈BUT SOME *PIKTORII* HAVE *NO* WORDS.〉
〈AND SOME HAVE NO PICTURES. WHEN WE SPEAK, WE DO NOT ALWAYS USE OUR WHOLE VOCABULARY...〉
WHAT WAS THAT LAST BIT?
WE DON'T ALWAYS NEED OUR WHOLE VOCABULARY.
SO IT'S STILL A COMIC EVEN WITH NO PICTURES?
〈PERHAPS. IT IS STILL A MAP. WHY NOT? I HAVE SEEN MAPS MADE ENTIRELY OF TEXT.〉
〈SOMETIMES THAT IS WHAT WORKS BEST. SO MANY *CARTOONISTS* ARE AFRAID OF WORDS.〉
HM. WHAT *IS* THE PURPOSE OF A MAP?

〈MAPS ARE OF TWO KINDS. SOME SEEK TO REPRESENT THE LOCATION OF *THINGS* IN SPACE. THAT IS THE FIRST KIND – THE GEOGRAPHY OF SPACE. BUT OTHERS REPRESENT THE LOCATION OF THINGS IN TIME – OR PERHAPS THEIR *PROGRESSION THROUGH* TIME. THESE MAPS TELL STORIES, WHICH IS TO SAY THEY ARE THE GEOGRAPHY OF TIME.〉
〈AND YOU MAKE THE SECOND KIND?〉
...na
Jirn
〈IN A SENSE, YES. BUT THESE DAYS I HAVE BEGUN TO FEEL THAT STORIES, TOO, ARE BASICALLY CONCERNED WITH SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS. THE PROXIMITY OF BODIES. TIME IS SIMPLY WHAT INTERFERES WITH THAT, YES?〉
Vuk!
klo
〈"THE PROXIMITY OF BODIES?"〉
〈YOU ARE HERE NEAR ME, LIKE A BRIGHT FLAME. THAT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHY OR HOW YOU ARE HERE. AND YOUR FRIEND ALSO – FOR ALL I KNOW YOU MAY BE LOVERS. OR ELSE YOU HAVE A LOVER BACK IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY OR IN CRIESTE.〉
〈THE THINGS WE CRAVE ARE EITHER NEAR US OR FAR. WHEREAS TIME IS ABOUT *PROCESS*. I HAVE LIVED MANY YEARS AND I HAVE LEARNED NOT TO TRUST PROCESS. *CREATION, DESTRUCTION*, THESE ARE NOT THE REAL STORY. WHEN WE DWELL ON SUCH THINGS, WE INEVITABLY LAPSE INTO CLICHÉ. THE TRUE DRAMA IS IN THESE RELATIONSHIPS OF SPACE.〉
NJiM
Klav
Io
Io
〈BUT A FLAME, EVEN A TOUCH, THESE ARE PROCESSES, NOT THINGS.〉
〈BUT BEHIND SUCH PROCESSES THERE IS A STILLNESS; AND IN THAT QUIET EXIST SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS WHICH TRANSCEND TIME.〉

UH- I'M LOST...
I'LL TELL YOU IN A MINUTE...
〈A STILL-NESS?〉
〈I'M AFRAID I HAVE WANDERED FAR FROM PIKTOR!!... NOW I AM TALKING ABOUT MAGIC.〉
〈MAGIC?〉
Ila mo ja
mir
Ilana mo jar
〈HERE.〉
〈THE BEKJAI GROWS ONLY IN THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS WHERE I WAS BORN. BUT THESE SEEDS WILL GROW ANYWHERE YOU DESIRE.〉
〈ITS FLOWERS ARE VERY, VERY BEAUTIFUL.〉
〈THEY WILL NOT PERISH AS LONG AS YOU - OR A MEMORY OF YOU - ARE NEAR. PLEASE TAKE THEM AS MY GIFT TO YOU.〉
Ir Mir...
〈FOR WARMING AN OLD HEART WITH YOUR BRIGHT FLAME.〉

(MAY YOU FIND THE THINGS YOU ARE CLOSE TO.)
ralje i oblire vir nje KLÒJ?
Ponj-
YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH THAT MAGIC. WHAT DID HE SAY?
AH, THE OLD BASTARD WAS FLIRTING WITH ME...
OH?
WELL- IF HE WERE FIFTY YEARS YOUNGER...
AND NOT A CARTOONIST ...

HI, SAM.
THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND YOU HERE.
I DON'T RECOGNISE IT AT ALL.
IS IT DIFFERENT?
ARE YOU KIDDING?
NO, REALLY. I THOUGHT IT ALWAYS LOOKED LIKE THIS...
WHAT DO YOU KNOW? YOU STILL HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING ABOUT MY HAIR.

...
UH-HAVE YOU DYED IT?
OH FER CHRISTSAKE
SO WHERE WILL YOU START?
MIGHT AS WELL EXCAVATE THE PUSCH-KINIA PATCH.
WHAT'S A PUSCHKINIA?
SHUT UP AND DIG, BOY WONDER.
to be continued...

Café Underground.
Chapter Four:
Rage.

IT IS THE SUMMER OF 1986 IN AUCKLAND CITY, A TIME OF PARTIES AND SEDUCTIONS. BUT THE AIR IS THICK WITH ILL OMENS, AND THERE IS A STRANGER AMONG US...
MIN-ISTRY —of— COMPULS-ORY JOY.
THE HAIRS
GLUEPOT. SAT. 18th, 25th,
NO USER PAY

GABRIEL.

TALL, DEVASTATINGLY HANDSOME, MYSTERIOUS, SOPHISTICATED AND-ABOVE ALL-EUROPEAN.

EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT HIM, EVERYONE WANTED HIM.

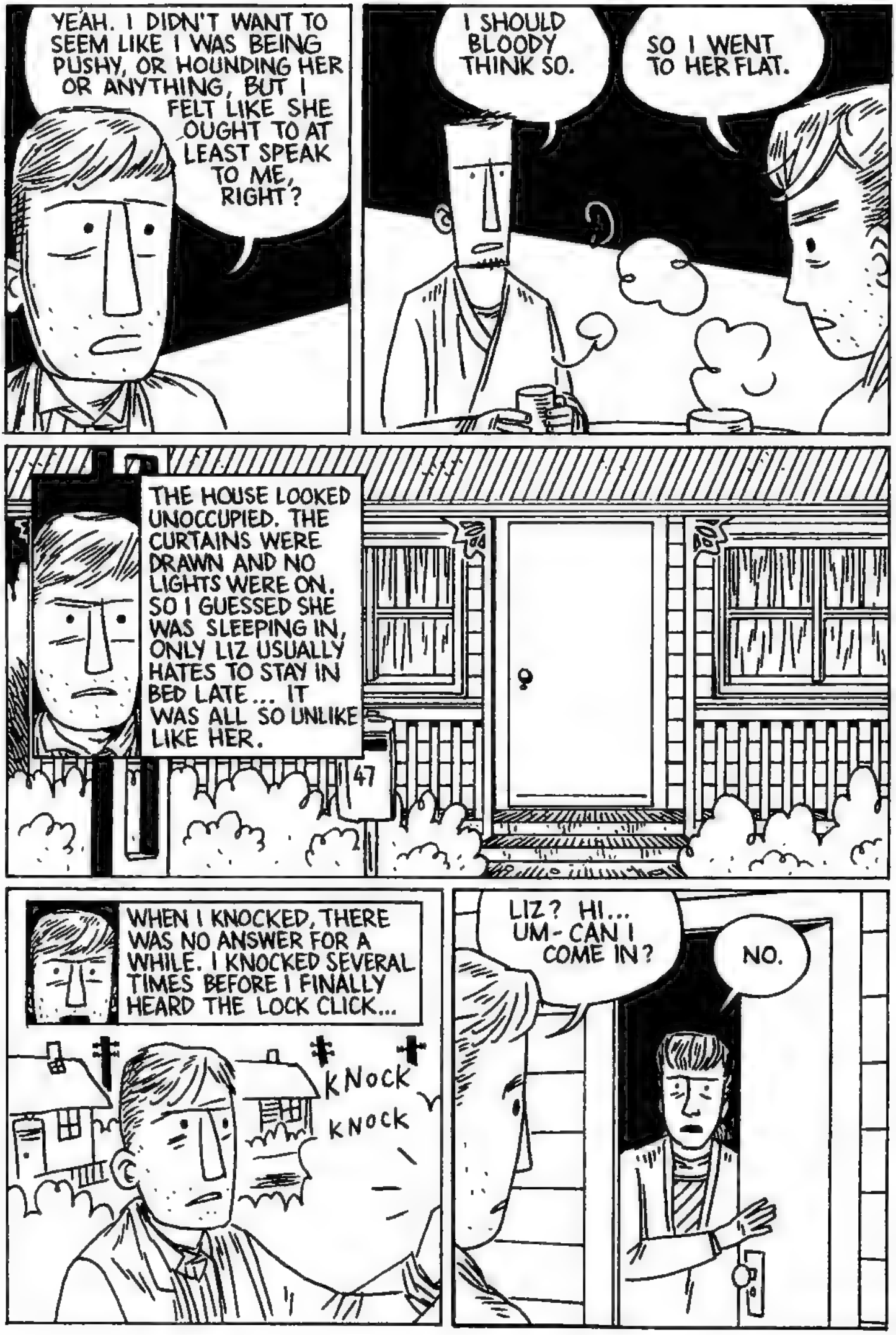
EXCEPT OLD ABRAHAM.

ALEX?
ABE
ABE - THANKS FOR THE BEER, BUT I THINK I JUST WANT TO GO HOME. SORRY.
YEAH. SURE. OKAY - UM - SHOULD I COME?
NO. 'BYE.

FUCK
SO.
BINGO.
REVELATION.
THIS IS WHAT RAGING IS GOOD FOR.
THE MUSIC IS FEROCIOUS, AND LOUD ENOUGH AND FAST ENOUGH TO UTTERLY CONSUME YOU. YOU THROW YOURSELF AROUND SO WILDLY YOU'RE HARDLY TOUCHING THE FLOOR ANYMORE. AND YOUR HEAD IS GONE. IF YOU SHAKE IT HARD & FAST ENOUGH, IT CAN'T KEEP UP AND THEN THERE'S NOTHING LEFT EXCEPT THE MUSIC...
...AND THE RAGING.

KNOCK KNOCK
RAW
CLICK
BANG
ALEX?
SORRY TO GET YOU UP- I HOPE IT'S NOT...
NO, THAT'S OKAY. COME IN. I'LL PUT THE KETTLE ON. COFFEE OR TEA?
UM- TEA. BLACK.
THERE SHOULD BE SOME CHOCOLATE CAKE IN THE FRIDGE UNLESS VICKI'S EATEN IT.
POWF!

VICKI'S EATEN IT.
THEN THERE SHOULD BE SOME DARK CHOCOLATE.
TWO SQUARES.
FINE. WE'LL RATION IT.
THANKS ABE. I'M FEELING BETTER ALREADY.
IT'S THE CHOCOLATE. IT HAS THE SAME CHEMICAL EFFECT ON THE BRAIN AS BEING IN LOVE. ONLY IT'S A LOT MORE RELIABLE.
SO... WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE AT TWO IN THE MORNING?
ELIZABETH.
AH.
I WENT TO SEE HER THIS AFTERNOON. I'D TRIED TO PHONE HER FOR DAYS, BUT SHE WASN'T RETURNING MY CALLS. I JUST NEEDED TO HEAR FROM HER, TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON.
SO YOU WENT OVER.

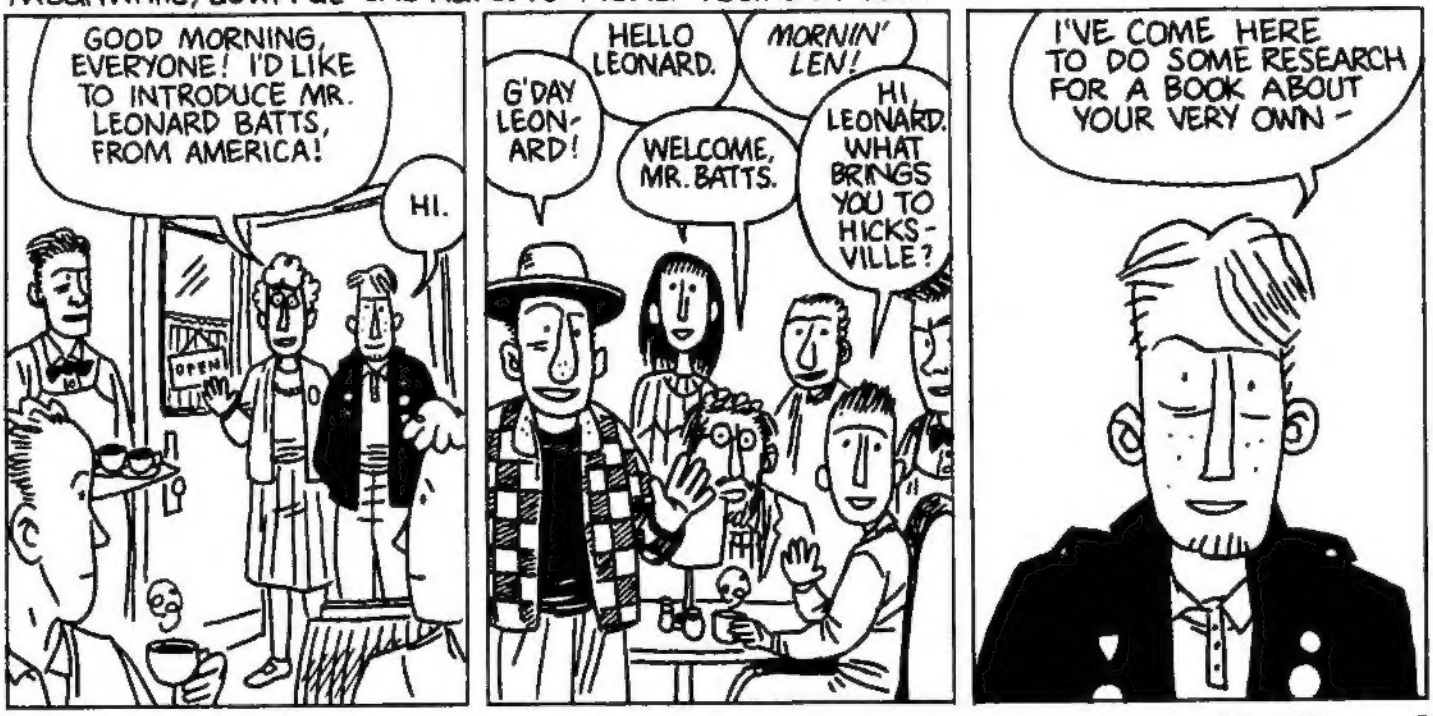

YEAH. I DIDN'T WANT TO SEEM LIKE I WAS BEING PUSHY, OR HOUNDING HER OR ANYTHING, BUT I FELT LIKE SHE OUGHT TO AT LEAST SPEAK TO ME, RIGHT?
I SHOULD BLOODY THINK SO.
SO I WENT TO HER FLAT.
THE HOUSE LOOKED UNOCCUPIED. THE CURTAINS WERE DRAWN AND NO LIGHTS WERE ON. SO I GUESSED SHE WAS SLEEPING IN, ONLY LIZ USUALLY HATES TO STAY IN BED LATE... IT WAS ALL SO UNLIKE LIKE HER.
47
WHEN I KNOCKED, THERE WAS NO ANSWER FOR A WHILE. I KNOCKED SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE I FINALLY HEARD THE LOCK CLICK...
KNOCK
KNOCK
LIZ? HI... UM- CAN I COME IN?
NO.

WE HAVE TO TALK, LIZ - I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING.
NOTHING'S HAPPENING, ALEX. I JUST DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU FOR A WHILE.
SURE, OKAY... BUT THIS IS REALLY *HARD*, LIZ. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FEELING...
NOTHING'S GOING ON. I'M FINE. I JUST NEED SOME SPACE TO SORT THINGS OUT. I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M READY.
I COULD TELL SHE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE ME. AT ALL. SHE STAYED INSIDE, IN SHADOW. *WHEW*. THIS WAS- IT'S NOT EASY... THIS'LL BE FUCKING HARD.
THEN SOMEONE ELSE WAS BEHIND HER.
WHO IS IT, ELIZABET'?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. DON'T WORRY.
LIZ-I-
DON'T CALL, ALEX. I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M READY.

IT WAS SO UNLIKE HER. I DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER TO BE ANGRY OR SAD OR WHAT. I'M JUST CONFUSED, I GUESS. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO THINK ABOUT OTHER THINGS ALL DAY AND IT HASN'T WORKED. SORRY TO TURN UP SO LATE...
DON'T BE STUPID. YOU CAN TURN UP ANY TIME.
ALEX - THE GUY AT LIZ'S: DID YOU SEE WHO IT WAS?
WELL - I THINK SO. I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE...
GABRIEL
GABRIEL
GABRIEL
GABRIEL
GABRIEL
GABRIEL
GABRIEL
GABRIEL
GEOFFREY HAD SUMMED IT UP WELL IN J.D.'S THAT DAY:
"FUCK."
"FUCK FUCK FUCK."
"FUCK."

TO BE CONTINUED...

Meanwhile, down at the Rarebit Fiend Tearooms...


GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE! I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE MR. LEONARD BATTS, FROM AMERICA!
HI.
OPEN
G'DAY LEONARD!
HELLO LEONARD.
MORNIN' LEN!
WELCOME, MR. BATTS.
HI, LEONARD. WHAT BRINGS YOU TO HICKSVILLE?
I'VE COME HERE TO DO SOME RESEARCH FOR A BOOK ABOUT YOUR VERY OWN -

The man who mentioned 'Dick Burger' in the Rarebit Fiend

apologies to: H.M. BATEMAN.

Comics' World Magazine Presents

MY COMICS and me

WITH A WORLD-FAMOUS CARTOONIST!

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GOOD EVENING. AS A WORLD-FAMOUS CARTOONIST, I AM OFTEN ASKED WHAT FIRST GOT ME INTERESTED IN THE COMIC STRIP ART FORM. WELL, THERE ARE MANY POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO THAT QUESTION...

PERHAPS IT WAS AN EARLY EXPOSURE TO SUCH CLASSICS OF THE MEDIUM AS HERGÉ'S *Tintin*, CARL BARKS' *Donald Duck* AND JACK KIRBY'S *Fantastic Four*.

OR MAYBE THE ADOLESCENT INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT *ROBERT CRUMB*...

MEATBALL!

SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT BY THE TENDER AGE OF 15, I HAD ALREADY SET UPON A CAREER IN THE CARTOON ARTS. I HAD AMASSED AN EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF THE FINEST EXAMPLES OF THE FORM AND WAS HARD AT WORK ON THE FIRST OF MY MAJOR CREATIONS...

...NOW KNOWN TO MY MANY ADMIRERS AS: "*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Fan.*"

LOVE AND
BUT IT CANNOT BE. I AM AN ARTIST AND AS SUCH I BELONG TO MY ART! NO MERE HUMAN BEING CAN COME BEFORE THAT!!
SOON, AT THE CONVENTION...
LET ME PUBLISH!
NO! I MUST PUBLISH YOU!
WE'LL TOP THEIR OFFER!
BUT WHO UNDER STANDS MY WORK?

THE SECOND QUESTION I AM OFTEN ASKED IS WHAT COMICS I COLLECT. TO ANSWER THIS WE MUST ENTER MY HERMETICALLY-SEALED, TEMPERATURE-CONTROLLED, COMBINATION-LOCKED, LOW-LIGHT, DOUBLE MYLAR BAGGED PRIVATE LIBRARY. IN HERE, ONE CAN FIND SUCH PRICELESS GEMS AS A MINT CONDITION COPY OF *Detective Comics* #27 AND A *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #31...

BUT NONE OF THESE VALUABLE ITEMS CAN COMPARE FOR ME WITH MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION - A COMPLETE RUN OF DYLAN HORROCKS' *Pickle*. *WHAT A MASTERPIECE! WHAT GENIUS! THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WORK OF PICTORIAL NARRATIVE SINCE THE BAYEAUX TAPESTRY!*

SUDDENLY... HOW'S THE NEXT ISSUE OF *Pickle* COMING ALONG DYLAN?

POOF!

E-EH? WHAT? OH-UH-*Pickle*-- ER-I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET PAST PAGE TWO...

Guleg ov Iranir tiroliani Mir...
Ne-maia
CHAT GIVE